



Coalition of Nunavut DEAs

What Can DEAs Do to Help Parents Get Involved in Education?

The most important thing **DEAs** can do for parents is to start a discussion in the community about education.

The beginning of the school year is a great time for DEAs to lead a community discussion about success in education. DEAs can do this by holding a **public meeting** or a **call-in radio show**. Talk to parents about what education **goals** are important for the community and how these goals can be **achieved**. Find out what **parent's expectations** are of the education their children should receive. Once DEAs have heard from parents, this information can be helpful to DEAs in discussing the School Program with the Principal.

DEAs serve an important role in meeting with school officials at the beginning of the school year to discuss **expectations** for student success, based on what they have **heard from parents**. At these meetings DEAs can discuss the School Program with the Principal. As defined in Section 8 of the Nunavut Education Act, “the School Program consists of the delivery of the curriculum established by the Minister *as modified by any local program developed by the district education authority*.” Before the end of the school year, DEAs should **review** with Principals the **results** of the school year including how schools met the **goals** of the School Program based on evaluations of the School Program that Principals conduct on a continual basis.

Principals also have a responsibility to encourage parent and community involvement in the School Program. Section 7 (5) of the Education Act directs the Principal to work “in co-operation with the district education authority...to develop and implement programs and procedures for parent and community involvement in the School Program”.

DEAs can also be an important voice in the community encouraging parents to talk with their children about the importance of success in education. There are important decisions that must be made as a child progresses through school. Parents need to understand these choices (e.g. which academic stream to chose in high school, or what extra help a student should receive), and discuss with their children the expectations for each stage of their education journey. DEAs are very important voices for encouraging community support for education goals.

As elected representatives of the community, DEAs also serve a role in ensuring that the School Program “is delivered in accordance with **Inuit societal values** and the principles and concepts of **Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit** and respect for **Inuit cultural identify**” Section 7 (4).

What can DEAs do to ensure that the School Program is delivered in accordance with Inuit Societal values?

DEAs can encourage parents to share their knowledge of Inuktitut and the Inuit culture, with students, teachers and school officials. Parents serve an important role in passing on the values of the Inuit culture, and DEAs can encourage parents to share this knowledge with students and teachers.

There are also activities that DEAs could encourage school officials to include in the School Program to promote parent involvement in education. These could include:

- School/parent planning nights.
- School/parent orientation in September.
- In-school parent support services for issues that arise with students.
- 'Introduction to the School Program' night to seek the input of the DEA and parents.
- Parent volunteer programs designed to encourage parents to contribute their knowledge of the Inuktitut language and culture.
- Elders discussion events.
- Developing a Family Handbook with parents and the DEA, which will include information specifically designed for parents.
- A joint school / DEA letter given to each parent welcoming students to the school and inviting parents to contact their child's teachers, principal and other school staff.
- Developing a School-Parent Communication handbook, including what parents can expect in the course of a school year, what to do when a student has to miss school, what to do if you suspect your child is being bullied etc.
- Using Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) to communicate key school dates, events and news.

The aim of these activities is to promote a sense of partnership between parents and the school and a sense of ownership in decisions.

For more information or assistance, please contact the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs office at (867) 979-5396, coalition1@northwestel.net.